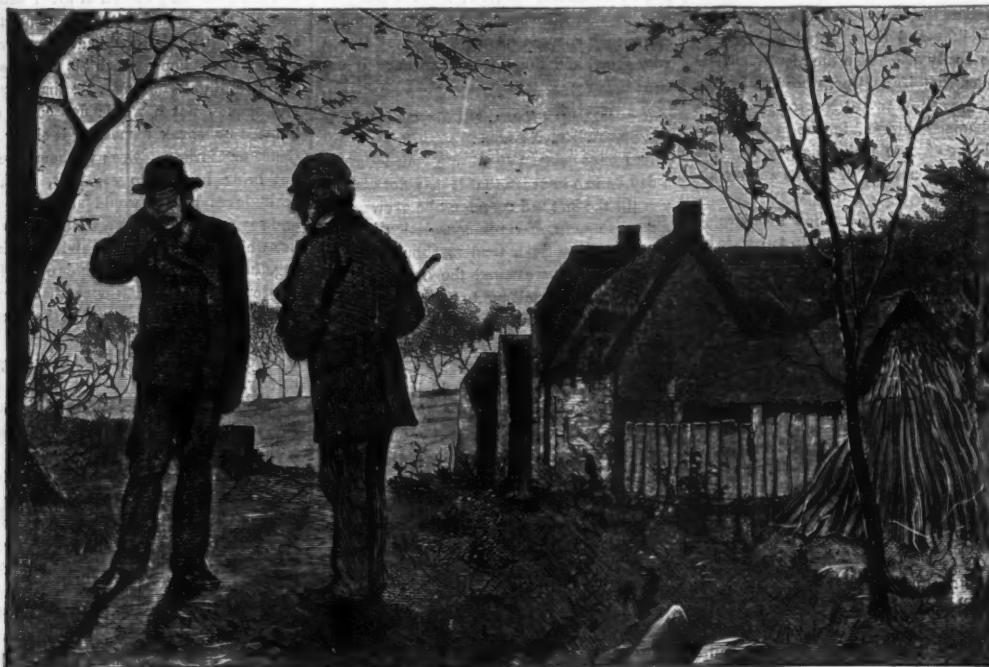


RALPH THE HEIR.

By ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

["RALPH THE HEIR," SUPPLEMENT NO. XII.; CONTINUED FROM SUPPLEMENT ACCOMPANYING JOURNAL OF NOVEMBER 19.]*



"Ralph, for the first time since the accident, burst out into a flood of tears."—Chapter XXXIV.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"SHE'LL ACCEPT YOU, OF COURSE."

They will pass over the solemn sadness of the funeral at Newton, and the subsequent reading of the old squire's will. As to the latter, the will was as it had been made some six or seven years ago. The squire had simply left all that he possessed to his illegitimate son Ralph Newton. There was no difficulty about the will. Nor was there any difficulty about the estate. The two lawyers came down to the funeral. Sir Thomas Underwood would have come, but that he was prevented by the state of his arm. A statement showing all that had been done in the matter was prepared for him, but it was agreed on all sides that the sale had not been made, and that the legitimate heir must succeed to the property. No one was disposed to dispute the decision. The squire's son

had never for a moment supposed that he could claim the estate. Nor did Ralph the heir suppose for a moment that he could surrender it after the explanation which he had received from the lawyer in London.

The funeral was over, and the will had been read, and at the end of November the three young men were still living together in the great house at Newton. The heir had gone up to London once or twice, instigated by the necessity of the now not difficult task of raising a little ready money. He must at once pay off all his debts. He must especially pay that which he owed to Mr. Neefit; and he must do so with many expressions of his gratitude—perhaps with some expressions of polite regret at the hardness of Polly's heart toward him. But he must do so certainly without any further entreaty that Polly's heart might be softened. Ah—with what marvellous good fortune had he escaped from that pitfall! For how much had he not to be

thankful to some favoring goddess who must surely have watched over him from his birth! From what shipwrecks had he not escaped! And now he was Squire of Newton, with wealth and all luxuries at command, hampered with no wife, oppressed by no debts, free from all cares. As he thought of his perfect freedom in these respects, he remembered his former resolution as to Mary Bonner. That resolution he would carry out. It would be well for him now to marry a wife, and, of all the women he had ever seen, Mary Bonner was certainly the most beautiful. With Newton all his own, with such a string of horses as he would soon possess, and with such a wife at the head of his table, whom need he envy, and how many were there who would not envy him?

Throughout November he allowed his horses to remain at the Moonbeam, being somewhat in doubt whether or no he would return to that fascinating hostelry. He re-

* RALPH THE HEIR has appeared in Supplements to the JOURNAL, accompanying Nos. 43, 46, 50, 54, 59, 63, 67, 72, 76, 80, and 86.

celved one or two most respectful letters from Mr. Horsball, in which glowing accounts were given of the sport of the season, and the health of his horses, and offers made of most disinterested services. Rooms should be ready for him at a moment's notice if he liked at any time to run over for a week's hunting. It was quite evident that, in the eyes of Mr. Horsball, Newton of Newton was a great man. And there came congratulations from Mr. Cox, in which no allusion whatever was made to the squire's somewhat uncivil conduct at their last meeting. Mr. Cox trusted that his dearest friend would come over and have another spell at the Moonbeam before he settled down for life—and then hinted in language that was really delicate in the niceness of its expression, that if he, Cox, were but invited to spend a week or two at Newton Priory before he banished himself for life to Australia, he would be able to make his way over the briny deep with a light heart and an uncomplaining tongue.

"You know, old fellow, how true I've always been to you," wrote Cox, in language of the purest friendship.

"As true as steel—to sausages in the morning, and brandy-and-soda at night," said Ralph to himself as he read this.

He behaved with thorough kindness to his cousin. The three men lived together for a month, and their intercourse was as pleasant as was possible under the circumstances. Of course there was no hunting during this month at Newton. Nor indeed did the heir see a hound till December, although, as the reader is aware, he was not particularly bound to revere his uncle's memory. He made many overtures to his namesake. He would be only too happy if his cousin—he always called the squire's son his cousin—would make Newton his home for the next twelvemonth. It was found that the squire had left behind him something like forty thousand pounds, so that the son was by no means to be regarded as a poor man. It was his idea at present that he would purchase in some pleasant county as much land as he might farm himself, and there set up his staff for life.

"And get about two and a half per cent. for your money," said the heir, who was beginning to consider himself learned in such matters, and could talk of land as a very serious thing in the way of a possession.

"What else am I to do?" said the other. "Two and a half per cent. with an occupation is better than five per cent. with none. I should make out the remainder, too, by farming the land myself. There is nothing else in the world that I could do."

As for remaining twelve months at Newton, that was, of course, out of the question. Nevertheless, when December came, he was still living in the house, and had consented to remain there till Christmas should have passed. He had already heard of a farm in Norfolk.

"The worst county for hunting in England," the heir had said.

"Then I must try and live without hunting," said Ralph, who was not the heir.

During all this time not a horse was sent to the meet from the Newton stables. The owner of Newton was contented to see the animals exercised in the park, and to amuse himself by schooling them over hurdles, and by high jumping at the bar.

During the past month the young squire had received various letters from Sir Thomas Underwood, and the other Ralph had received one. With Sir Thomas's caution, advice, and explanations, to his former ward, the story has no immediate concern; but his letter to him who was to have been Mary Bonner's suitor may concern us more nearly. It was very short, and the reader shall have it entire:

"POPHAM VILLA, 10th November, 186—.

"MY DEAR MR. NEWTON:

"I have delayed answering your letter for a day or two in order that it may not disturb you till the last sad ceremony be over. I do not presume to offer you consolation in your great sorrow. Such tenders should only be made by the nearest and the dearest. Perhaps you will permit me to say that what little I have seen of you, and what further I have heard of you, assure to you my most perfect sympathy.

"On that other matter, which gave occasion for your two letters to me, I shall best perhaps discharge my duty by telling you that I showed them both to my niece; and that she feels, as do I, that they are both honorable to you, and of a nature to confer honor upon her. The change in your position, which I acknowledge to be most severe, undoubtedly releases you, as it would have released her, had she been bound, and chose to accept such release.

"Whenever you may be in this neighborhood we shall be happy to see you.

"The state of my arm still prevents me from writing with ease.

"Yours, very faithfully,

"THOMAS UNDERWOOD."

Newton, when he received this letter, struggled hard to give to it its proper significance, but he could bring himself to no conclusion respecting it. Sir Thomas had acknowledged that he was released, and that Mary Bonner would also have been released had she placed herself under any obligation; but Sir Thomas did not say a word from which his correspondent might gather whether in his present circumstances he might still be regarded as an acceptable suitor. The letter was most civil, most courteous, almost cordial in its expression of sympathy; but yet it did not contain a word of encouragement. It may be said that the suitor had himself so written to the lady's uncle as to place himself out of the way of all further encouragement; as to have put it beyond the power of his correspondent to write a word to him that should have in it any comfort. Certainly he had done so. He had clearly shown in his second letter that he had abandoned all idea of making the match as to which he had

shown so much urgent desire in his first letter. He had explained that the marriage would now be impossible, and had spoken of himself as a ruined, broken man, all whose hopes were shipwrecked. Sir Thomas could hardly have told him in reply that Mary Bonner would still be pleased to see him. And yet Mary Bonner had almost said so. She had been very silent when the letter was read to her. The news of Mr. Newton's death had already reached the family at Popham Villa, and had struck them all with awe. How it might affect the property even Sir Thomas had not absolutely known at first; though he was not slow to make it understood that in all probability this terrible accident would be ruinous to the hopes which his niece had been justified in entertaining. At that hour Mary had spoken not a word; nor could she be induced to speak respecting it either by Patience or Clarissa. Even to them she could not bring herself to say that, if the man really loved her, he would still come to her and say so. There was a feeling of awe upon her which made her mute, and stern, and altogether unresponsive in the hands of her friends. It seemed even to Patience that Mary was struck by a stunning sorrow at the ruin which had come upon her lover's prospects. But it was not so at all. The thought wronged her utterly. What stunned her was this—that she could not bring herself to express a passion for a man whom she had seen so seldom, with whom her conversation had been so slight, from whom personally she had received no overtures of attachment, even though he were ruined. She could not bring herself to express such a passion; but yet it was there. When Clarissa thought that she might obtain if not a word, at least a tear, Mary appeared to be dead to all feeling, though crushed by what she had lost. She was thinking the while whether it might be possible for such a one as her to send to the man and to tell him that that which had now occurred had of a sudden made him really dear to her. Thoughts of maiden boldness flitted across her mind, but she could not communicate them even to the girls who were her friends. Yet in silence and in solitude she resolved that the time should come in which she would be bold.

Then young Newton's second letter reached the house, and that also had been read to her.

"He is quite right," said Sir Thomas. "Of course it releases both of you."

"There was nothing to release," said Mary, proudly.

"I mean to say that, having made such a proposition as was contained in his first letter, he was bound to explain his altered position."

"I suppose so," said Mary.

"Of course he was. He had made his offer, believing that he could make you mistress of Newton Priory—and he had made it thinking that he himself could marry in that position. And he would have been in that position had not this most unforeseen and terrible calamity occurred."

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"I do not see that it makes any difference," said Mary, in a whisper.

"What do you mean, my dear?"

"I hardly know, uncle."

"Try to explain yourself, Mary."

"If I had accepted any man when he was rich, I should not go back when he was poor—unless he wanted it." This also she said in a whisper.

"But you had not accepted him?"

"No," said Mary, still in a whisper. Sir Thomas, who was, perhaps, not very good at such things, did not understand the working of her mind. But, had she dared, she would have asked her uncle to tell Mr. Newton to come and see her. Sir Thomas, having some dim inkling of what might perhaps be the case, did add a paragraph to his letter, in which he notified to his correspondent that a personal visit would be taken in good part.

By the end of the first week in December things were beginning to settle into shape at the Priory. The three young men were still living together at the great house, and the tenants on the estate had been taught to recognize the fact that Ralph, who had ever been the heir, was in truth the owner. Among the laborers and poorer classes there was no doubt much regret, and that regret was expressed. The tenants, though they all liked the squire's son, were not upon the whole ill-pleased. It was in proper conformity with English habits and English feelings that the real heir should reign. Among the gentry the young squire was made as welcome as the circumstances of the heir would admit. According to their way of thinking, personally popular as was the other man, it was clearly better that a legitimate descendant of the old family should be installed at Newton Priory. The old squire's son rode well to hounds, and was loved by all; but nothing that all the world could do on his behalf would make him Newton of Newton. If only he would remain in the neighborhood and take some place suited to his income, every house would be open to him. He would be received with no diminution of attachment or respect. Overtures of this nature were made to him. This house could be had for him, and that farm could be made comfortable. He might live among them as a general favorite; but he could not under any circumstances have been—Newton of Newton. Nothing, however, was clearer to himself than this—that, as he could not remain in the county as the master of Newton Priory, he would not remain in the county at all.

As things settled down and took shape, he began to feel that even in his present condition he might possibly make himself acceptable to such a girl as Mary Bonner. In respect of fortune there could be no reason whatever why he should not offer her his hand. He was in truth a rich man, whereas she had nothing. By birth he was nobody—absolutely nobody; but then also would he have been nobody had all the lands of Newton belonged to him. When he had written that second letter, waiving all claim to Mary's hand because of the inferiority of

his position, he was suffering from a morbid view which he had taken of his own affairs. He was telling himself then—so assuring himself, though he did not in truth believe the assurance—that he had lost not only the estate, but also his father's private fortune. At that moment he had been unstrung, demoralized, and unmanned—so weak that a feather would have knocked him over. The blow had been so sudden, the solitude and gloom of the house so depressing, and his sorrow so crushing, that he was ready to acknowledge that there could be no hope for him in any direction. He had fed himself upon his own grief, till the idea of any future success in life was almost unpalatable to him. But things had mended with him now, and he would see whether there might not yet be joys for him in the world. He would first see whether there might not be that one great joy which he had promised to himself.

And then there came another blow. The young squire had resolved that he would not hunt before Christmas in the Newton country. It was felt by him and by his brother that he should abstain from doing so out of respect to the memory of his uncle, and he had declared his purpose. Of course there was neither hunting nor shooting in these days for the other Ralph. But at the end of a month the young squire began to feel that the days went rather slowly with him, and he remembered his stud at the Moonbeam. He consulted Gregory; and the parson, though he would fain have induced his brother to remain, could not say that there was any real objection to a trip to the B. and B's. Ralph would go there on the 10th of December, and be back at his own house before Christmas. When Christmas was over, the other Ralph was to leave Newton—perhaps forever.

The two Ralphs had become excellent friends, and when the one that was to go declared his intention of going with no intention of returning, the other pressed him warmly to think better of it, and to look upon the Priory at any rate as a second home. There were reasons why it could not be so, said the namesake; but in the close confidence of friendship which the giving and the declining of the offer generated came this further blow. They were standing together leaning upon a gate, and looking at the exhumation of certain vast roots, as to which the trees once belonging to them had been made to fall in consequence of the improvements going on at Darvell's farm.

"I don't mind telling you," said Ralph the heir, "that I hope soon to have a mistress here."

"And who is she?"

"That would be mere telling—would it not?"

"Clarissa Underwood?" asked the unsuspecting Ralph.

There did come some prick of conscience, some qualm of an injury done, upon the young squire as he made his answer. "No; not Clarissa—though she is the dearest, sweetest girl that ever lived, and would make a better wife perhaps than the girl I think of."

"And who is the girl you think of?"

"She is to be found in the same house."

"You do not mean the elder sister?" said the unfortunate one. He had known well that his companion had not alluded to Patience Underwood; but in his agony he had suggested to himself that mode of escape.

"No; not Patience Underwood. Though, let me tell you, a man might do worse than marry Patience Underwood. I have always thought it a pity that Patience and Gregory would not make a match of it. He, however, would fall in love with Clara, and she has too much of the rake in her to give herself to a parson. I was thinking of Mary Bonner, who, to my mind, is the handsomest woman I ever saw in my life."

"I think she is," said Ralph, turning away his face.

"She hasn't a farthing, I fancy," continued the happy heir, "but I don't regard that now. A few months ago I had a mind to marry for money; but it isn't the sort of thing that any man should do. I have almost made up my mind to ask her. Indeed, when I tell you, I suppose I have quite made up my mind."

"She'll accept you—of course."

"I can say nothing about that, you know. A man must take his chance. I can offer her a fine position, and a girl, I think, should have some regard to money when she marries, though a man should not. If there's nobody before me I should have a chance, I suppose."

His words were not boastful, but there was a tone of triumph in his voice. And why should he not triumph? thought the other Ralph. Of course he would triumph. He had every thing to recommend him. And as for himself—for him, the dispossessed one—any particle of a claim which he might have secured by means of that former correspondence had been withdrawn by his own subsequent words. "I dare say she'll take you," he said, with his face still averted.

Ralph the heir did indeed think that he would be accepted, and he went on to discuss the circumstances of their future home, almost as though Mary Bonner were already employed in getting together her wedding garments. His companion said nothing further, and Ralph the heir did not discover that any thing was amiss.

On the following day Ralph the heir went across the country to the Moonbeam in Buckinghamshire.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

NEEFIT MEANS TO STICK TO IT.

THERE was some business to be done as a matter of course before the young squire could have all his affairs properly settled. There were debts to be paid, among which Mr. Neefit's stood certainly first. It was first in magnitude, and first in obligation; but it gave Ralph no manner of uneasiness. He had really done his best to get Polly to marry him, and, luckily for him—by the direct in-

terposition of some divine Providence, as it now seemed to Ralph—Polly had twice refused him. It seemed to him, indeed, that divine Providence looked after him in a special way, breaking his uncle's neck in the very nick of time, and filling a breeches-maker's daughter's mind with so sound a sense of the propriety of things, as to induce her to decline the honor of being a millstone round his neck, when positively the offer was pressed upon her. As things stood there could be no difficulty with Mr. Neeft. The money would be paid, of course, with all adjuncts of accruing interest, and Mr. Neeft should go on making breeches for him to the end of the chapter. And for raising this money he had still a remnant of the old property which he could sell, so that he need not begin by laying an ounce of encumbrance on his paternal estates. He was very clear in his mind at this period of his life that there should never be any such encumbrance in his days. That remnant of property should be sold, and Neeft, Horsball, and others, should be paid. But it certainly did occur to him, in regard to Neeft, that there had been that between them which made it expedient that the matter should be settled with some greater courtesy than would be shown by a simple transaction through his man of business. Therefore he wrote a few lines to Mr. Neeft on the day before he left the Priory—a few lines which he thought to be very civil.

"NEWTON, 9th December, 186-.

"MY DEAR MR. NEEFT:

"You have probably heard before this of the accident which has happened in my family. My uncle has been killed by a fall from his horse, and I have come into my property earlier than I expected. As soon as I could begin to attend to matters of business, I thought of my debt to you, and of all the obligation I owe you. I think the debt is one thousand pounds; but whatever it is it can be paid now. The money will be ready early in the year, if that will do for you—and I am very much obliged to you. Would you mind letting Mr. Carey know how much it is, interest and all? He is our family lawyer.

"Remember me very kindly to Miss Polly. I hope she will always think of me as a friend. Would you tell Bawwah to put three pairs of breeches in hand for me—leather?

"Yours very truly,
"RALPH NEWTON."

The wrath of Mr. Neeft on receiving this letter at his shop in Conduit Street was almost divine. He had heard from Polly an account of that last interview at Ramsgate, and Polly had told her story as truly as she knew how to tell it. But the father had never for a moment allowed himself to conceive that therefore the thing was at an end, and had instructed Polly that she was not to look upon it in that light. He regarded his young customer as absolutely bound to him, and would not acknowledge to himself that such obligation could be annulled by Polly's girlish folly. And he did believe that young Newton in-

tended to act, as he called it, "on the square." So believing, he was ready to make almost any sacrifice of himself; but that Newton should now go back, after having received his hard money, was to him a thing quite out of the question. He scolded Polly with some violence, and asked whether she wanted to marry such a lout as Mogga. Polly replied with spirit that she wouldn't marry any man till she found that she could love him, and that the man loved her.

"Ain't he told you as he loves you ever so often?" said Neeft.

"I know what I'm doing of, father," said Polly, "and I'm not going to be drove."

Nevertheless Mr. Neeft had felt certain that if young Newton would still act upon the square, things would settle themselves rightly. There was the money due, and, as Neeft constantly said to himself, "money was a thing as was not to be got over."

Then had come upon the tradesman the tidings of the old squire's death. They were read to him out of a newspaper by his shopman, Waddle.

"I'm blessed if he ain't been and tumbled all at once into his uncle's shoes," said Waddle.

The paragraph in question was one which appeared in a weekly newspaper some two days after the squire's death. Neeft, who at the moment was turning over the pages of his ledger, came down from his desk and stood for about ten minutes in the middle of his shop, while the Herr ceased from his cutting, and Waddle read the paragraph over and over again. Neeft stood stock still, with his hands in his breeches-pockets, and his great, staring eyes fixed upon vacancy.

"I'm blessed if it ain't true," said Waddle, convinced by the repetition of his own reading.

News had previously reached the shop that the squire had had a fall. Tidings as to troubles in the hunting-field were quick in reaching Mr. Neeft's shop—but there had been no idea that the accident would prove to be fatal. Neeft, when he went home that night, told his wife and daughter.

"That will be the last of young Newton," said Mrs. Neeft.

"I'm d— if it will!" said the breeches-maker.

Polly maintained a discreet silence as to the heir, merely remarking that it was very sad for the old gentleman. Polly at that time was very full of admiration for Mogga—in regard, that is, to the political character of her lover. Mogga had lost his election, but was about to petition.

Neeft was never called upon, in the way of his own trade, to make funeral garments. Men, when they are bereaved of their friends, do not ride in black breeches. But he had all a tailor's respect for a customer with a dead relation. He felt that it would not become him to make an application to the young squire on a subject connected with marriage, till the tombstone over the old squire should have been properly adjusted. He was a patient man, and could wait. And he was a

man not good at writing letters. His customer and future son-in-law would turn up soon; or else, the expectant father-in-law might drop down upon him at the Moonbeam or elsewhere. As for a final escape, Polly Neeft's father hardly feared that any such attempt would be made. The young man had acted on the square, and had made his offer in good faith.

Such was Mr. Neeft's state of mind when he received the young squire's letter. The letter almost knocked him down. There was a decision about it, a confidence that all was over between them except the necessary payment of the money, an absence of all doubt as to "Miss Polly," which he could not endure. And then that order for more breeches, included in the very same paragraph with Polly, was most injurious. It must be owned that the letter was a cruel, heart-rending, bad letter. For an hour or so it nearly broke Mr. Neeft's heart. But he resolved that he was not going to be done. The young squire should marry his daughter, or the whole transaction should be published to the world. He would do such things and say such things that the young squire should certainly not have a good time of it. He said not a word to Polly of the letter that night, but he did speak of the young squire. "When that young man comes again, Miss Polly," he said "I shall expect you to take him."

"I don't know any thing about that, father," said Polly. "He's had his answer, and I'm thinking he won't ask for another." Upon this the breeches-maker looked at his daughter, but made no other reply.

During the two or three following days Neeft made some inquiries, and found that his customer was at the Moonbeam. It was now necessary that he should go to work at once, and, therefore, with many misgivings, he took Waddle into his confidence. He could not himself write such a letter as then must be written—but Waddle was perfect at the writing of letters. Waddle shrugged his shoulders, and clearly did not believe that Polly would ever get the young squire. Waddle indeed went so far as to hint that his master would be lucky in obtaining payment of his money—but, nevertheless, he gave his mind to the writing of the letter. The letter was written as follows:

"CONDUIT STREET, December 14, 186-.

"DEAR SIR:

"Yours of the 9th instant has come to hand, and I beg to say with compliments how shocked we were to hear of the squire's accident. It was terribly sudden, and we all felt it very much; as in the way of our business we very often have to.

"As to the money, that can stand. Between friends such things needn't be mentioned. Any accommodation of that kind was and always will be ready when required. As to that other matter, a young gentleman like you won't think that a young lady is to be taken at her first word. A bargain is a bargain, and honorable is honorable, which nobody knows as well as you who was always disposed to be upon the square. Our Polly

hasn't forgotten you—and isn't going." (It should be acknowledged, on Mr. Waddle's behalf, that that last assurance was inserted by the unassisted energy of Mr. Neeft himself.) "We shall expect to see you without delay, here or at Hendon, as may best suit; but pray remember that things stand just as they was. Touching other matters, as needn't be named here, orders will be attended to as usual if given separate.

"Yours very truly and obedient,
"THOMAS NEEFT."

This letter duly reached the young squire, and did not add to his happiness at the Moonbeam. That he should ever renew his offer to Polly Neeft was, he well knew, out of the question; but he could see before him an infinity of trouble should the breeches-maker be foolish enough to press him to do so. He had acted "on the square." In compliance with the bargain undoubtedly made by him, he had twice proposed to Polly, and had Polly accepted his offer on either of these occasions, there would—he now acknowledged to himself—have been very great difficulty in escap- ing from the engagement. Polly had thought fit to refuse him, and of course he was free. But, nevertheless, there might be trouble in store for him. He had hardly begun to ask himself in what way this trouble might next show itself, when Neeft was at the Moonbeam. Three days after the receipt of his letter, when he rode into the Moonbeam yard on his return from hunting, there was Mr. Neeft waiting to receive him.

He certainly had not answered Mr. Neeft's letter, having told himself that he might best do so by a personal visit in Conduit Street; but now that Neeft was there, the personal intercourse did not seem to him to be so easy. He greeted the breeches-maker very warmly, while Pepper, Cox, and Mr. Horsball, with sundry grooms and helpers, stood by and admired. Something of Mr. Neeft's money, and of Polly's charms as connected with the young squire, had already reached the Moonbeam by the tongue of Rumor; and now Mr. Neeft had been waiting for the last four hours in the little parlor within the Moonbeam bar. He had eaten his mutton-chop, and drunk three or four glasses of gin-and-water, but had said nothing of his mission. Mrs. Horsball, however, had already whispered her suspicions to her husband's sister, a young lady of forty, who dispensed rum, gin, and brandy, with very long ringlets and very small glasses.

"You want to have a few words with me, old fellow," said Ralph to the breeches-maker, with a cheery laugh. It was a happy idea that of making them all around conceive that Neeft had come after his money. Only it was not successful. Men are not dunned so rigorously when they have just fallen into their fortunes. Neeft, hardly speaking above his breath, with that owlish, stolid look, which was always common to him except when he was measuring a man for a pair of breeches, acknowledged that he did. "Come along, old fellow," said Ralph, taking him by the arm. "But what'll you take to

drink first?" Neeft shook his head, and accompanied Ralph into the house. Ralph had a private sitting-room of his own, so that there was no difficulty on that score. "What's all this about?" he said, standing with his back to the fire, and still holding Neeft by the arm. He did it very well, but he did not as yet know the depth of Neeft's obstinacy.

"What's it all about?" asked Neeft, in disgust.

"Well; yes. Have you talked to Polly herself about this, old fellow?"

"No, I ain't; and I don't mean."

"Twice I went to her, and twice she refused me. Come, Neeft, be reasonable. A man can't be running after a girl all his life, when she won't have any thing to say to him. I did all that a man could do; and, upon my honor, I was very fond of her. But, God bless my soul—there must be an end to every thing."

"There ain't to be no end to this, Mr. Newton."

"I am to marry the girl whether she will or not?"

"Nohow," said Mr. Neeft, oracularly. "But when a young gentleman asks a young lady as whether she'll have him, she's not a-going to jump down his throat. You knows that, Mr. Newton. And as for money, did I ask for any settlement? I'd a' been ashamed to mention money. When are you a-coming to see our Polly, that's the question?"

"I shall come no more, Mr. Neeft."

"You won't?"

"Certainly not, Mr. Neeft. I've been twice rejected."

"And that's the kind of man you are, is it? You're one of them sort, are you?" Then he looked out of his saucer-eyes upon the young squire with a fishy ferocity, which was very unpleasant. It was quite evident that he meant war. "If that's your game, Mr. Newton, I'll be even with you."

"Mr. Neeft, I'll pay you any thing that you say I owe you."

"Damn your money!" said the breeches-maker, walking out of the room. When he got down into the bar he told them all there that young Newton was engaged to his daughter, and that, by G—, he should marry her.

"Stick to that, Neeft," said Lieutenant Cox.

"I mean to stick to it," said Mr. Neeft. He then ordered another glass of gin-and-water, and was driven back to the station.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"HE MUST MARRY HER."

ON the day following that on which Mr. Neeft made his journey to the Moonbeam, Sir Thomas Underwood was at his chambers in London. It was now eight weeks since his bone had been broken, and though he still carried his arm in a sling, he declared of himself that he was able to go about as usual—which assertion was taken at the villa

as meaning that he was now able to live in Southampton Buildings without further assistance from women. When Patience reminded him, with tears in her eyes, that he could not as yet put on his own coat, he reminded her that Stemm was the most careful of men. Up to London he went with a full understanding that he was not at any rate to be expected home on that night. He had business on hand of great importance, which, as he declared, made his presence in town imperative. Mr. Trigger, from Percycross, was to be up with reference to the pestilent petition which had been presented against the return of Griffenbottom and himself. Moggs had petitioned on his own behalf, and two of the Liberals of the borough had also petitioned in the interest of Mr. Westmacott. The two Liberal parties who had quarrelled during the contest, had now again joined forces in reference to the petition, and there was no doubt that the matter would go on before the judge. Mr. Trigger was coming up to London with reference to the defence. Sir Thomas gave Stemm to understand that Mr. Trigger would call at one o'clock.

Exactly at one o'clock the bell was rung at Sir Thomas's outside door, and Stemm was on the alert to give entrance to Mr. Trigger. When the door was opened, who should present himself but our unfortunate friend Neeft? He humbly asked whether Sir Thomas was within, and received a reply which, as coming from Stemm, was courteous in the extreme. "Mr. Trigger, I suppose—walk in, Mr. Trigger." Neeft, not at all understanding why he was called Trigger, did walk in. Stemm, opening the door of his master's sanctum, announced Mr. Trigger. Neeft advanced into the middle of the room. Sir Thomas, with some solicitude as to the adjustment of his arm, rose to greet his agent from Percycross.

"This isn't Mr. Trigger," said Sir Thomas.

"He told me he was, anyhow," said Stemm.

"I didn't tell you nothing of the kind," said Neeft.

"But you come from Percycross?" said Sir Thomas.

"No I don't; I comes from Conduit Street," said Neeft.

"You must go away," said Stemm, leaving the door open, and advancing into the room as though to turn the enemy's flank.

But Neeft, having made good his point so far, did not intend to be dislodged without a struggle on his own part. "I've something to say to Sir Thomas about Mr. Newton, as I wants to say very particular."

"You can't say it now," said Stemm.

"Oh, but I can," said Neeft, "and it won't take three minutes."

"Wouldn't another day do for it, as I am particularly busy now?" pleaded Sir Thomas.

"Well, Sir Thomas—to tell the truth, it wouldn't," said Mr. Neeft, standing his ground.

Then there came another ring at the bell.

"Ask Mr. Trigger to sit down in the oth-

er room for two minutes, Stemm," said Sir Thomas.

And so Mr. Neefit had carried his point.

"And now, sir," said Sir Thomas, "as I am particularly engaged, I will ask you to be as quick as possible."

"My name is Neefit," began the breeches-maker—and then paused. Sir Thomas, who had heard the name from Ralph, but had forgotten it altogether, merely bowed his head. "I am the breeches-maker of Conduit Street," continued Mr. Neefit, with a proud conviction that he too had ascended so high in his calling as to be justified in presuming that he was known to mankind. Sir Thomas again bowed. Neefit went on with his story. "Mr. Newton is a-going to behave to me very bad."

"If he owes you money, he can pay you now," said Sir Thomas.

"He do owe me money—a thousand pound he owe me."

"A thousand pounds for breeches!"

"No, Sir Thomas. It's most for money lent; but it's not along of that as I'd trouble you. I know how to get my money, or to put up with the loss if I don't. A thousand pound ain't here nor there—not in what I've got to say. I wouldn't demean myself to ring at your bell, Sir Thomas—not in the way of looking for a thousand pounds."

"In God's name, then, what is it? Pray be quick."

"He's going back from his word as he's promised to my daughter. That's what it is." As Neefit paused again, Sir Thomas remembered Ralph's proposition, made in his difficulties, as to marrying a tradesman's daughter for money, and at once fell to the conclusion that Mr. and Miss Neefit had been ill-used. "Sir Thomas," continued the breeches-maker, "I've been as good as a father to him. I gave him money when nobody else wouldn't."

"Do you mean that he has had money from you?"

"Yes; in course he has; ever so much. I paid for him a lot of money to 'Orball, where he 'unts. Money! I should think so. Didn't I pay Moggs for him, the bootmaker? The very money as is rattling in his pocket now is my money."

"And he engaged himself to your daughter?"

"He engaged hisself to me to marry her. He won't say no otherwise himself. And he asked her twice. Why, Sir Thomas, he was all on the square about it till the old gentleman broke his neck. He hadn't nowhere else to go to for a shilling. But now the estate's come in like, he's for behaving dishonorable. He don't know me yet; that's what he don't. But I'll make him know me, Sir Thomas."

Then the door was opened, and Stemm's head appeared. "Mr. Trigger says as he's in the greatest possible haste, Sir Thomas." The reader, however, may as well be informed that this was pure invention on the part of Mr. Stemm.

Sir Thomas tore his hair and rubbed his face. He couldn't bid Neefit to call again, as he certainly did not desire to have a second

visit. "What can I do for you, Mr. Neefit? I have no doubt the money will be paid, if owing. I will guarantee that for you."

"It ain't the money. I knows how to get my money."

"Then what can I do for you?"

"Make him go upon the square, Sir Thomas."

"How can I make him? He's twenty-six years old, and he's nothing to me. I don't think he should marry the young lady. He's not in her rank of life. If he has done her an injury, he must pay for it."

"Injury!" shouted Neefit, upon whose mind the word produced an unintended idea. "No, no! Our Polly ain't like that. By G—, I'd eat him, if it was that way! There ain't a duchess in the land as 'd 've giv' him his answer more ready than Polly had he ever spoke to her that way."

"If he has given rise to hopes which through him will be disappointed," said Sir Thomas, gravely, "he is bound to make what compensation may be in his power."

"Compensation be d—!" said Neefit.

"He must marry her."

"I don't think he will do that."

"You didn't think he would take my money, I suppose; but he did. You didn't think he'd come and spend his Sundays out at my cottage, but he did. You didn't think as he'd come after our Polly down to Ramsgate, but he did. You didn't think as he'd give me his word to make her his wife, but he did." At every assertion that he made, the breeches-maker bobbed forward his bullet head, stretched open his eyes, and stuck out his under lip. During all this excited energy, he was not a man pleasant to the eye. "And now how is it to be, Sir Thomas? That's what I want to know."

"Mr. Newton is nothing to me, Mr. Neefit."

"Oh—that's all. Nothing to you, ain't he? Wasn't he brought up by you just as a son like? And now he ain't nothing to you! Do you mean to say as he didn't ought to marry my girl?"

"I think he ought not to marry her."

"Not arter his promise?"

Sir Thomas was driven very hard, whereas, had the sly old breeches-maker told all his story, there would have been no difficulty at all. "I think such a marriage would lead to the happiness of neither party. If an injury has been done—as I fear may be too probable—I will advise my young friend to make any reparation in his power—short of marriage. I can say nothing further, Mr. Neefit."

"And that's your idea of being on the square, Sir Thomas?"

"I can say nothing further, Mr. Neefit. As I have an appointment made, I must ask you to leave me." As Sir Thomas said this, his hand was upon the bell.

"Very well—very well. As sure as my name's Neefit, he shall hear of me. And so shall you, Sir Thomas.—Don't you be poking at me in that way, old fellow. I don't choose to be poked at." These last words were addressed to Stemm, who had entered the room,

and was holding the door open for Mr. Neefit's exit with something more than the energy customary in speeding a parting guest. Mr. Neefit, however, did take his departure, and Sir Thomas joined Mr. Trigger in the other room.

We will not be present at that interview. Sir Thomas had been in a great hurry to get rid of Mr. Neefit, but it may be doubted whether he found Mr. Trigger much better company. Mr. Trigger's business chiefly consisted in asking Sir Thomas for a considerable sum of money, and in explaining to him that the petition would certainly cost a large sum beyond this—unless the expenses could be saddled on Westmacott and Moggs, as to which result Mr. Trigger seemed to have considerable doubt. But perhaps the bitterest part of Mr. Trigger's communication consisted in the expression of his opinion that Mr. Griffenbottom should be held by Sir Thomas free from any expense as to the petition, on the ground that Griffenbottom, had he stood alone, would certainly have carried one of the seats without any fear of a petition. "I don't think I can undertake that, Mr. Trigger," said Sir Thomas. Mr. Trigger simply shrugged his shoulders.

Sir Thomas, when he was alone, was very uncomfortable. While at Percyross he had extracted from Patience an idea that Ralph the heir and Clarissa were attached to each other, and he had very strongly declared that he would not admit an engagement between them. At that time Ralph was supposed to have sold his inheritance, and did not stand well in Sir Thomas's eyes. Then had come the squire's death, and the altered position of his late ward. Sir Thomas would be injured, would be made subject to unjust reproach if it were thought of him that he would be willing to give his daughter to a young man simply because that young man owned an estate. He had no such sordid feeling in regard to his girls. But he did feel that all that had occurred at Newton had made a great difference. Ralph would now live at the Priory, and there would be enough even for his extravagance. Should the Squire of Newton ask him for his girl's hand with that girl's consent, he thought that he could hardly refuse it. How could he ask Clarissa to abandon so much seeming happiness because the man had failed to keep out of debt upon a small income? He could not do so. And then it came to pass that he was prepared to admit Ralph as a suitor to his child should Ralph renew his request to that effect. They had all loved the lad as a boy, and the property was wholly unencumbered. Of course he said nothing to Clarissa; but should Ralph come to him there could be but one answer. Such had been the state of his mind before Mr. Neefit's visit.

But the breeches-maker's tale had altered the aspect of things very greatly. Under no circumstances could Sir Thomas recommend the young squire to marry the daughter of the man who had been with him; but if Ralph Newton had really engaged himself to this girl, and had done so with the purport of bor-

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rowing money from the father, that might be a reason why, notwithstanding the splendor of his prospects, he should not be admitted to further intimacy at the villa. To borrow money from one's tradesman was, in the eyes of Sir Thomas, about as inexcusable an offence as a young man could commit. He was too much disturbed in mind to go home on the following day, but on the Thursday he returned to the villa. The following Sunday would be Christmas-day.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FOR TWO REASONS.

THE young squire, as soon as Neeft had left him in his own sitting-room at the Moon-beam, sat himself down and began to think over his affairs seriously. One thing was certain to him—nothing on earth should induce him to offer his hand again to Polly Neeft. He had had a most miraculous escape, and assuredly would run no further risk in that direction. But, though he had escaped, he could perceive that there was considerable trouble before him—considerable trouble and perhaps some disgrace. It certainly could not be proved against him that he had broken any promise, as there had been no engagement; but it could be made public that he had twice offered himself to Polly, and could also be made public that he had borrowed the breeches-maker's money. He kept himself alone on that evening; and, though he hunted on the following day, he was not found to be a lively companion either by Cox or Pepper. The lieutenant was talking about Neeft and Neeft's daughter all day; but Mr. Pepper, who was more discreet, declined to canvass the subject. "Its nothing to me who a man marries and who he don't," said Mr. Pepper. "What sort of horses he rides—that's what I look at." During this day and the next Ralph did consider the state of his affairs very closely, and the conclusion he came to was this, that the sooner he could engage himself to marry Mary Bonner the better. If he were once engaged, the engagement would not then be broken off because of any previous folly with Miss Neeft; and, again, if he were once engaged to Mary Bonner, Neeft would see the absurdity of torturing him further in regard to Polly. On the Wednesday evening he went up to town, and on the Thursday morning he put himself into a cab and ordered the man to drive him to Popham Villa.

It was about noon when he started from town; and though he never hesitated—did not pause for a moment after he had made up his mind as to the thing that he would do, still he felt many misgivings as he was driven down to Fulham. How should he begin his story to Mary Bonner, and how should he look Clary Underwood in the face? And yet he had not an idea that he was in truth going to behave badly to Clarissa. There had no doubt been a sort of tenderness in the feeling that had existed between them—a something just a little warmer than brotherly regard.

They had been thrown together and had liked each other. And, as he was driven nearer to the villa, he remembered distinctly that he had kissed her on the lawn. But did any one suppose that a man was bound to marry the first girl he kissed—or if not the first, then why the second, or the third? Clarissa could have no fair ground of complaint against him; and yet he was uneasy as he reflected that she too must know the purport of his present visit to the villa.

And he was not quite easy about Mary. The good things which he carried in his hand were so many that he did not conceive that Mary would refuse him; but yet he wished that the offer had been made, and had been accepted. Hitherto he had taken pleasure in his intercourse with young ladies, and had rather enjoyed the excitement of those moments which to some men are troublesome and even painful. When he had told Clarissa that she was dearer than any one else, he had been very happy while he was telling her. There had been nothing of embarrassment to him in the work of proposing to Polly Neeft. There may perhaps have been other passages in his life of the same nature, and he certainly had not feared them beforehand or been ashamed of them afterward. But now he found himself endeavoring to think what words he would use to Mary Bonner, and in what attitude he would stand or sit as he used them. "The truth is," he said to himself, "a man should do these kind of things without premeditation." But not the less was he resolved, and at the gate he jumped out of his cab with a determination to have it over as soon as possible. He desired the cabman to wait for him at the nearest stables, remarking that he might be there for a few minutes, or for a few hours, and then turned to the gate. As he did so, he saw Sir Thomas walking from the direction of Fulham Bridge. Sir Thomas had come down by the railway on the other side of the river, and was now walking home. A sudden thought struck the young squire. He would begin his work by telling his tale to Sir Thomas. There could be nothing so fitting as that he should obtain the uncle's leave to address the niece.

The two men greeted each other, and there were many things to be said. Sir Thomas had not seen his ward since the old squire's death, and Ralph had not seen Sir Thomas since the election at Percycross and the accident of the broken arm. Sir Thomas was by far too reticent, too timid, and too reflective a man to begin at once whatever observations he might have to make ultimately in regard to Miss Polly Neeft. He was somewhat slow of speech, unless specially aroused, and had hardly received the congratulations of his young friend respecting the election, and expressed with some difficult decency his sorrow for the old squire's death as combined with his satisfaction that the estate had not been sacrificed, when Ralph stopped him just as they had reached the front door, and, with much solemnity of manner, declared his wish to make a very particular private communication to Sir Thomas.

"Certainly," said Sir Thomas, "certainly. Come into my room." But there was some delay before this privacy could be achieved, for in the hall they were met by the three girls, and of course there were many things to be said by them. Clarissa could hardly repress the flutter of her heart. When the reader last saw her flutter, and last heard her words as she spoke of her love to her cousin, she was taking an opportunity of declaring to Mary Bonner that she did not begrudge the brilliance of Mary's present prospects—though the grand estate which made them brilliant was in a measure taken from her own hopes. And she had owned at the same time that she did not dare to feel confidence in her own love, because her lover would now be too poor in his own esteem to indulge himself with the luxury of a wife. All this Mary had accepted from her, certainly with no expression of triumph, but certainly with some triumph in her heart. Now this was entirely changed—and here was her lover, with his fortune restored to him, once more beneath her father's roof! She gave him her hand the first of the three. She could not repress herself. He took it with a smile, and pressed it warmly. But he turned to Patience and took hers as rapidly as he was able. Then came Mary's turn.

"I hope you are also glad to see me once again?" he said.

Clarissa's heart sunk within her as she heard the words. The appreciation of a woman in such matters is as fine as the nose of a hound, and is all but unintelligible to a man.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Newton," said Mary, smiling.

"But if he asks her, she'll take him." No such words as these were formed even in Clarissa's mind; but after some fashion such was the ejaculation of her heart. Mary's "Oh, yes," had meant little enough, but could Mary withstand such chances if they were offered to her?

Sir Thomas led the way into his private room, and Ralph followed him.

"You won't be long, papa," said Patience.

"I hope not," said Sir Thomas.

"Remember, Ralph, you will be keeping lunch waiting," said Patience.

Then the two men were alone. Sir Thomas's mind had recurred to Neeft at the first moment of Ralph's request. The young man was going to consult him as to the best mode of getting rid of that embarrassment. But in the hall another idea had come upon him. He was to be asked for his consent regarding Clarissa. As he seated himself in one chair and asked Ralph to take another, he had not quite made up his mind as to the answer he would give. There must at any rate be some delay. The reader will of course remember that Sir Thomas was persuaded that Ralph had engaged himself to marry Polly Neeft.

Ralph rushed boldly at his subject at once. "Sir Thomas," he said, "I am going to make a proposition, and I wish to ask you for your consent. I have made up my mind that the sooner I marry in my present condi-

tion the better." Sir Thomas smiled and assented. "And I want to know whether you will object to my asking Miss Bonner to be my wife."

"Miss Bonner!" said Sir Thomas, throwing up both his hands.

"Yes, sir; is there any objection on your part?"

Sir Thomas hardly knew how to say whether there was or was not an objection on his part. In the first place he had made up his mind that the other Ralph was to marry Mary—that he would do so in spite of that disclaimer which had been made in the first moment of the young man's disinheritance. He, Sir Thomas, however, could have no right to object on that score. Nor could he raise any objection on the score of Clarissa. It did seem to him that all the young people were at cross-purposes, that Patience must have been very stupid and Clarissa most ad-dle-pated, or else that this Ralph was abominably false; but still, he could say nothing respecting that. No tale had reached his ears which made it even possible for him to refer to Clarissa. But yet he was dissatisfied with the man, and was disposed to show it. "Perhaps I ought to tell you," said Sir Thomas, "that a man calling himself Neeft was with me yesterday."

"Oh, yes; the breeches-maker."

"I believe he said that such was his trade. He assured me that you had borrowed large sums of money from him."

"I do owe him some money."

"A thousand pounds, I think he said."

"Certainly as much as that."

"Not for breeches—which I suppose would be impossible, but for money advanced."

"Part one and part the other," said Ralph.

"And he went on to tell me that you were engaged—to marry his daughter."

"That is untrue."

"Were you never engaged to her?"

"I was never engaged to her, Sir Thomas."

"And it was all a lie on the part of Mr. Neeft? Was there no foundation for it? You had told me yourself that you thought of such a marriage."

"There is nothing to justify him in saying that I was ever engaged to the young lady. The truth is, that I did ask her, and she—refused me."

"You did ask her?"

"I did ask her," said Ralph.

"In earnest?"

"Well; yes—certainly in earnest. At that time I thought it the only way to save the property. I need not tell you how wretched I was at the time. You will remember what you yourself had said to me. It is true that I asked her, and that I did so by agreement with her father. She refused me—twice. She was so good, so sensible, and so true, that she knew she had better not make herself a party to such a bargain. Whatever you may think of my own conduct, I shall not have behaved badly to Miss Neeft."

Sir Thomas did think very ill of Ralph's conduct, but he believed him. After a while the whole truth came out, as to the money lent and as to Neeft's schemes. It was of course understood by both of them that Ralph was required neither by honesty nor by honor to renew his offer. And then under such circumstances was he or was he not to be allowed to propose to Mary Bonner? At first Ralph had been much dismayed at having the Neeft mine sprung on him at such a moment; but he collected himself very quickly, and renewed his demand as to Mary. Sir Thomas could not mean to say that, because he had been foolish in regard to Polly Neeft, therefore he was to be debarred from marrying! Sir Thomas did not exactly say that; but, nevertheless, Sir Thomas showed his displeasure. "It seems," said he, "particularly easy to you to transfer your affections."

"My affection for Miss Neeft was not strong," said Ralph. "I did, and always shall, regard her as a most excellent young woman."

"She showed her sense in refusing you," said Sir Thomas.

"I think she did," said Ralph.

"And I doubt much whether my niece will not be equally—sensible."

"Ah—I can say nothing as to that."

"Were she to hear this story of Miss Neeft, I am sure she would refuse you."

"But you would not tell it to her—as yet! If all goes well with me, I will tell it to her some day. Come, Sir Thomas, you don't mean to be hard upon me at last. It cannot be that you should really regret that I have got out of that trouble."

"But I regret much that you should have borrowed a tradesman's money, and more that you should have offered to pay the debt by marrying his daughter." Through it all, however, there was a feeling present to Sir Thomas that he was, in truth, angry with the squire of Newton, not so much for his misconduct in coming to propose to Mary so soon after the affair with Polly Neeft, but because he had not come to propose to Clarissa. And Sir Thomas knew that such a feeling, if it did really exist, must be overcome. Mary was entitled to her chance, and must make the best of it. He would not refuse his sanction to a marriage with his niece on account of Ralph's misconduct, when he would have sanctioned a marriage with his own daughter in spite of that misconduct. The conversation was ended by Sir Thomas leaving the room with a promise that Miss Bonner should be sent to fill his place. In five minutes Miss Bonner was there. She entered the room very slowly, with a countenance that was almost savage, and during the few minutes that she remained there she did not sit down.

"Sir Thomas has told you why I am here?" he said, advancing toward her, and taking her hand.

"No; that is—no. He has not told me."

"Mary—"

"Mr. Newton, my name is Miss Bonner."

"And must it between us be so cold as that?" He still had her by the hand, which she did not at the moment attempt to withdraw. "I have come to tell you, at the first moment that was possible to me after my uncle's death, that of all women in the world I love you the best."

Then she withdrew her hand. "Mr. Newton, I am sorry to hear you say so; very sorry."

"Why should you be sorry? If you are unkind to me like this, there may be reason why I should be sorry. I shall, indeed, be very sorry. Since I first saw you, I have hoped that you would be my wife."

"I never can be your wife, Mr. Newton."

"Why not? Have I done any thing to offend you? Being here as one of the family you must know enough of my affairs to feel sure—that I have come to you the first moment that was possible. I did not dare to come when I thought that my position was one that was not worthy of you."

"It would have been the same at any time," said Mary.

"And why should you reject me—like this; without a moment's thought?"

"For two reasons," said Mary, slowly, and then she paused, as though doubting whether she would continue her speech, or give the two reasons which now guided her. But he stood, looking into her face, waiting for them. "In the first place," she said, "I think you are untrue to another person." Then she paused again, as though asking herself whether that reason would not suffice. But she resolved that she would be bold, and give the other. "In the next place, my heart is not my own to give."

"Is it so?" asked Ralph.

"I have said as much as can be necessary—perhaps more, and I would rather go now." Then she left the room with the same slow, steady step, and he saw her no more on that day.

Then, in those short five minutes, Sir Thomas had absolutely told her the whole story about Polly Neeft, and she had come to the conclusion that, because in his trouble he had offered to marry a tradesman's daughter, therefore he was to be debarred from ever receiving the hand of a lady! That was the light in which he looked upon Mary's first announcement. As to the second announcement he was absolutely at a loss. There must probably, he thought, have been some engagement before she left Jamaica. Not the less on that account was it an act of unpardonable ill-nature on the part of Sir Thomas—that telling of Polly Neeft's story to Mary Bonner at such a moment.

He was left alone for a few minutes after Mary's departure, and then Patience came to him. Would he stay for dinner? Even Patience was very cold to him. Sir Thomas was fatigued and was lying down, but would see him, of course, if he wished it. "And where is Clarissa?" asked Ralph. Patience said that Clarissa was not very well. She also was lying down. "I see what it is," said Ralph, turning upon her angrily. "You are, all of you, determined to quarrel with me because of my uncle's death."

"I do not see why that should make us quarrel," said Patience. "I do not know that any one has quarrelled with you."

Of course he would not wait for dinner, nor would he have any lunch. He walked out on to the lawn with something of a blister in his step, and stood there for three or four minutes looking up at the house and speaking to Patience. A young man when he has been rejected by one of the young ladies of a family, has rather a hard time of it till he gets away. "Well, Patience," he said at last, "make my farewells for me." And then he was gone.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

